

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8819

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS JIDDA 5704

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, SA

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH SYRIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE MUSTAFA TLAS

1. JIDDA DAILY UKAZ SEPTEMBER 29 SPLASHED OVER ITS FRONT PAGE WHAT IT TERMED EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW GIVEN BY SYRIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE MUSTAFA TLAS TO THE ASSISTANT EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THE NEWSPAPER. MOST INTERESTING ITEM IN INTERVIEW WAS AN EXCHANGE ON POSSIBLE ISRAELI NUCLEAR CAPABILITY IN WHICH TLAS SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT SYRIA COULD PREVENT ANY ISRAELI NUCLEAR ATTACK. TLAS REFUSED TO ANSWER A NUMBER OF INTERESTING QUESTIONS BEARING ON ARAB MILITARY COOPERATION AND PREPAREDNESS.

2. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE INTERVIEW:

Q.: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF NEWS THAT ISRAEL IS ABOUT TO START A WAR AGAINST THE ARABS?

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A.: WE HAVE THE MEANS TO REACH EVERY PLACE IN PALESTINE AND

THE MEANS TO TRANSPORT ARMS AND BOMBS TO EVERY PLACE IN ISRAEL.

Q.: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE NEWS THAT ISRAEL HAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND IS ABOUT TO PRODUCE TACTICAL ATOMIC BOMBS?

A.: THE NEWS OF ISRAELI NUCLEAR BOMBS IS SCIENTIFICALLY AND TECHNOLOGICALLY UNTRUE. WHEN ISRAEL HAS NUCLEAR BOMBS WE WILL HAVE THE MEANS TO PREVENT ISRAEL FROM USING THEM. WHETHER ISRAEL NOW POSSESSED NUCLEAR BOMBS, IS WORKING TOWARDS GETTING THEM, OR EVEN IF ISRAEL IS ABOUT TO PRODUCE THE BOMB, WE HAVE THE MEANS OF PREVENTING ISRAEL FROM USING IT.

Q.: WHAT WOULD THE ARABS DO IF THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO OBTAIN ARMS FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES?

A.: I FAVOR ESTABLISHING AN ARAB WAR INDUSTRIES ORGANIZATION. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY OF TIPPING THE BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN THE ARABS AND ISRAEL IN THE ARABS' FAVOR. AMERICA SELLS ARMS TO ISRAEL AND THE USSR TO THE ARABS. SUPPOSE THESE TWO STATES AGREED TO RESTRICT THE SUPPLY OF ARMS? THEN THE ARABS WOULD HAVE NO PLACE TO GET THEIR ARMS. THUS THE ARAB WAR INDUSTRIES ORGANIZATION IS THE ONLY SOURCE WHICH WOULD BE ABLE TO GUARANTEE US THE FREEDOM TO ACCOMPLISH OUR TASK IN THE FUTURE . . .

Q.: HAS THE ARMS ORGANIZATION BEEN ESTABLISHED?

A.: STUDIES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE DISCUSSED AT THE ARAB SUMMIT.
HORAN

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